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" What mighty contests rise from trivial things !"
POPE.

TO THE

INDEPENDENT PEOPLE OF HAMPSHIRE.

The Pauper's Action.

GENTLEMEN,

In the poem, from which my motto is taken, you will, I dare say, recollect, that the poet records the important consequences that resulted from a gentleman's cutting off a *lock of a lady's hair*. Disproportioned as those consequences were to their cause, they are, I think, surpassed, in that respect, by the consequences, which have resulted from *the running away of a* CARTER-BOY *from my service*, which act has produced, probably, a greater noise and bustle, and excited more curiosity and more interest in this county, than any act or event that has taken place within the long reign of the present king ; that is to say, almost half a century. Notwithstanding this, however, I should not, in this elaborate manner, have addressed you upon the subject, had the noise and bustle been confined within the county. My intention was merely to have contradicted, in the *county*-papers, the falshoods, which had been spread abroad. But, perceiving that the TRIAL, which took place at Winchester, last week, relative to this affair, has been made, in the *London* ministerial prints, a subject of vast importance, the ground-work of new calumnies, and the intended means of injuring that great public cause, in the supporting of which our enemies know me to be instrumental to the utmost of my power : perceiving this, I think it necessary to enter fully into the subject in my own work, in order that the refutation may circulate as widely as the charge; that it may even go beyond it, and that, in countries where an English ministerial paper is never seen, the character of such publications may be made known.

Those amongst you, Gentlemen, who were at Winchester during the last week, and who, of course, heard the universal buz, saw the knots of people, in all parts, laying their heads together, and who, at last, saw the court crammed even to suffocation; and all this on account of a thing the most trifling, that the law can, when administered by a judge, possibly take notice of, and that, in spite of all that could be done by all the machinations of *all* the parties, high and low, concerned in the scheme, obtained from me damages to the amount of only *three pounds, six shillings, and eight-pence;* you, who were eye-witnesses of the scene, and who had the means of hearing, from my neighbours, the real state of the facts, and the real motives of the action; you must have ceased to feel any surprize whatever on the subject; but, to those, who were not at Winchester ; to those whom the story has reached only through the news-papers, it must seem utterly astonishing, that all this out-cry should have been made, that all this interest should have been excited, by an act, the commission of which should call for damages to the amount of only *one-third part of ten pounds.* A London paper, called the MORNING POST, has filled almost the whole of its columns, of Saturday last, with an account of this trial, to the exclusion of even the *French Bulletins*, which record the battle of Wolkersdorf; that battle, which, perhaps, will decide the fate of the European quarter of the world. The fall of Austria appears, with these gentlemen, to be a mere trifle, when compared with a hope of bringing me down ; the struggle between the Emperors Napoleon and Francis seems to be but a thing of secondary importance, while there is a struggle between me and my carter-boy. This paper, upon the face of it, seems to say : " There has, to be sure, " been a battle in Austria, and the last " hope of our only remaining ally seems " now to be completely annihilated ; but, " never mind that, loyal reader, for, look " here ! here we have *Cobbett* in damages " to the amount of *3l. 6s. 8d.*"——According to this print, the damages against the three parties, were laid at *a thousand pounds.* Pretty modest for a pauper's being held in duress during about *seven hours;* but, was it not, then, very much

like a defeat to get but *ten* pounds out of the *thousand?* I am sued for 333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and the jury say, that, at the most, I ought to pay the odd 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, just about the amount of the wine that almost every man drinks in a fortnight, and I drink none. The damages laid, appear to have been very well proportioned to the story. They seem to have swelled up together; and, when they came into the court, and had to face an honest and intelligent jury, who were not to be imposed upon by either *rant* or *cant*, they both together shrunk into just a *hundredth* part of the magnitude they had assumed; and, if the jury could have been informed of the *whole* of the facts, they would have shrunk into nothing, for not one farthing of damages would have been awarded; but, as we shall see, by-and-by, the action was *so contrived* as to put it out of our power to produce any of the most material facts to the jury, who were, therefore, obliged to give their verdict upon evidence brought all on one side.

That this action was not brought *for the sake of the pauper* the jury appeared to be very well convinced. Indeed, the real object of it was clear enough to every person of common discernment, the moment it was discovered whence came the *advice* to bring the action, namely, from a bench of magistrates at DROXFORD, composed as we shall by-and-by see. This object is clearly enough explained in the speech of MR. BOROUGH, one of the counsel for the pauper, the substance of which speech has been published in the *Portsmouth* newspaper, in these words.——"The Plaintiff "was a labouring man, residing in the "parish of Droxford, Hants, in the service "of Richard Goodlad, esq. a Magistrate for "the county. The Plaintiff was of quiet and "honest habits. The Defendant, *Cobbett*, "was the *well known* Author of the Political "Register; who, for the last five or six "years, had been resident at Botley, in "that county. He was long the *pretended* "*friend and advocate for the liberty of the* "*subject*, and the privileges of Englishmen. At the *public Meetings in that* "*county*, he had taken a conspicuous part "in declaiming against the *abuse of power*, "and was then addressing *weekly letters to* "*the people of Hampshire*, urging the necessity of a Reform in the state, in order to "preserve the ends of freedom, and the "true spirit of the English Constitution; "but the character which he assumed was "badly supported by *his conduct in domestic life*. He was *oppressive* and *severe* "around the *whole circle* which his power "and influence extended to, the sequel of "which would ill accord with his professions. The other Defendants were "Blacksmiths."——These are the words, attributed to the counsel for the pauper plaintiff; these are the words published as part of the speech of a man who was assigned to plead the cause of this pauper. Who, then, can be fool enough to believe, that this action was advised and carried on for the sake of the pauper? And who can refrain from admiring the good sense and firmness of the jury, who, by their verdict, defeated the real object of the scheme? The *Morning Post* has inserted a part of Mr. BOROUGH's speech not much less interesting, which part the Portsmouth paper has omitted. It is that where he expresses his hope, that the jury will make a *distinction* between the parties; that they will take the burthen of damages off the other two, and *lay it all upon Mr. Cobbett.*

After this, it is hardly necessary to say to any man of common discernment, that the pauper was a mere cat's-paw in this action; that his pretended sufferings made no part or particle of the real motive of the action; and, in short, that the whole thing, from the beginning to the end, was a mere invention for the purpose of misrepresenting my character, and of causing it to be believed, that, while I am preaching against *public oppressors*, I am, as to all those who are under my power, *myself an oppressor*. This was the point; this was the jet of the plan; this was the purpose for which a little village attorney was set to work to bring forward the pauper and his family, and to ferret out evidence even amongst the servants that were still living in my own house. But, though this conclusion must be drawn by every man of common sense, still I think it may be useful to relate minutely all the circumstances of this transaction, from which, better than from any general description, you, Gentlemen, and the public in general, will be able to form a just opinion of the conduct of the several parties concerned.

A lad, about 16 or 17 years of age, named JESSE BURGESS, was my servant in husbandry, in the month of March last, and had been so for about two months, or a little better. Some time in the latter end of February, I found fault with him *for coming in to breakfast before he had cleaned out his stable;* and, on the first of March, I found fault with him, and that, too, in

very sharp language, for lying in bed after I myself was up, that is to say, *after 5 o'clock.* These were the only times that I ever even *found fault* with him, as far as I can recollect.——On the 2nd of March, that is to say, the next morning, the boy got up very early and set off from his service. ——His sister, Mary Burgess, who was also a servant in my house, was then sent by me to tell her parents, and the boy too, if she found him at home, that, if he came back again *that day*, I would forgive him; but, that, if he did not, nothing upon earth should induce me to forgive him. He did not come back. I, according to my word, got a warrant for him from Mr. Smith of Southampton, and delivered it to Mr. Astlett, the constable of Botley, in order that he might take up the boy, which he did on the 3rd of March, and having brought him to Botley, the boy escaped, which escape produced the pretended false-imprisonment of the plaintiff, Wm. BURGESS, the brother of Jesse, and which also gave a handle for the bringing of the action.——But, before we go to that, let us finish the story of Jesse, who, in the first instance, was to have all the wages he *asked*, and was told, that, if he behaved well, he should have *more*. He lived as well as I myself did; he went to bed when he pleased; he had a good fire to sit by; he had every thing that heart could wish; but, I insisted upon his getting up *early in the morning*, having full as much detestation for a sluggard as I have for a thief. Of this he had fair warning when he was hired. He was told, over and over again, that he must rise early; that, as to other things, I might look over a good deal, but that I never would overlook his lying late in bed. Boys are, however, apt to be sleepy, and, if he had came back, when his sister went for him, I should merely have told him to get himself another master, his services being, in fact, not worth to me, the half, no, nor the fifth part, of his food, living in the manner that he lived. But, there was, in the case of a servant running away and setting me at defiance, a duty which I owed to the community, and especially to my neighbours, occupying lands, who must have experienced great injury from such an example, if this boy had been suffered to get off with impunity. There are many persons, who, in such a case, would not take the trouble, and especially if, as was really the fact here, the running away is rather a lucky thing for the master; but, that is not my way: I always endeavour to discharge my duty towards the community: I, in such cases, look upon the crime not as committed against *me*, but against the public; and I act accordingly. Upon this principle it was, that, when the boy had escaped, I spared no pains or expence to recover him. He has cost me more, probably, in advertisements, than he would have earned during the year; but, what of that? I have caught him at last; he has been sent to prison; and the example will be of general utility. What a villainous thing must it be in any one to do that which shall induce people in this rank of life to set contracts at nought; to think nothing of their engagements; to make agreements with a fraudulent intention; to teach them all the tricks and quirks of pettifoggers; to make them clever in nothing but roguery; to give that turn to their minds, which, in the end, must lead them to the gallows. What a villainous thing it must be for any one to do this? ——Before the boy was taken up and sent to prison, there might be some ground for supposing that he had been *ill-used;* but, *after* that, there could be none, especially when the circumstances, under which he was committed, are known. I shall by-and-by speak of these circumstances, which form a sort of under-plot in the grand drama. Suffice it, at present, to say, that the boy was taken at Winchester, in the very room where the Attorney had his witness, and was, after a full examination, and a remarkably patient hearing of all he had to say, *committed to prison.* This, of itself, is a pretty good proof, that he was *used well* while at my house, and that he had no real ground of complaint, and, consequently, no reasonable cause for quitting my service. The editors of the Portsmouth paper, amongst the many falshoods, which they have knowingly stated, have this, "that the boy was *not* a "servant *in husbandry.*" If so, what pretty *magistrates* must those be, who committed him *to prison* for quitting my service? I mention this as one instance of the length, to which these retailers of falshood will go. In fact, they stick at nothing. There is no falshood too bold for them. They know very well, that they shall be exposed, and that all good men will despise them; but, they value not the opinions of good men; they make sure of the *wages* of their falshoods and calumnies, and having those, they are perfectly dead to all feelings of shame or of conscience. It is the conduct of their

employers and prompters that would surprize one, were it not the uniform practice of such people to give way to their envy and hatred, and to turn a deaf ear to the voice of reason.—Thus, it is, I think, made manifest enough, that as far as related to my *servant*, Jesse, I acted as became a master and a public-spirited man. The *mother* of the boy came, a few days before his running away, and *got his wages* up to the 1st of March or thereabouts. It was, therefore, clear, that the intention was to get the boy away for the *spring and summer*, after having placed him in good keep during that part of the year when there was little to do. This is a very common trick through the country; my neighbours, the farmers, are plagued half out of their lives with these desertions, which always take place just as the sun begins to shine on both sides of the hedge; that is to say, when those who have been warmed and fed all the winter, are called upon to make some remuneration by their labour. Nothing is so common as the sending of people to prison for this offence: Sir Wm. Heathcote, I was told, sent a boy to prison for the same offence, only a day or two before I was at Winchester; but, Sir Wm. Heathcote was not a person capable of attracting attention; he was not a person, whom peculators and hireling writers found it their interest to misrepresent; he was not a person to excite the envy and the hatred of so many wretches, versed in the arts of cowardly calumny; in short, he had not for his enemy every public-robber, every low, dirty, hungry, pettifogging fellow in the whole county.

We must now return to the time when the boy, Jesse, was first taken up, and when the *escape*, which led to the *action*, took place.——Mr. ASTLETT, the constable of Botley, took him, at his father's house, about six miles from Botley, in the night of the 3rd of March, and brought him to Botley, to a public-house called the Dolphin, whither, by the indulgence of the constable, he was accompanied by his *mother* and his elder brother, WM. BURGESS, the pauper plaintiff.——In the morning Mr. Astlett, who is a blacksmith, had occasion to go to his own house, and, while away, he left his prisoner in the hands of the tything man, whose name is DUBBER. While the boy was in the custody of Dubber, this latter says, that the mother came with a pretended message from me, *desiring that the boy might be permitted to come to my house*; that thereupon he let the boy go, and that the mother and the two sons went off together.——Be this as it may, whether Dubber was thus *deceived*, or whether he, in conjunction with people at the public-house, *connived* at the boy's escape (the latter being by far the most probable) the boy did escape; he ran away somewhere, and the mother and her elder son, the pauper plaintiff, made the best of their way towards their home. ——Mr. Astlett, the constable, finding what had taken place, set out, ordering Dubber to go with him, in pursuit of them. The boy was not to be found; but, they took up the brother and the old woman, for having aided in the escape, and these they brought to Botley.——Now, mind, all this had taken place *before I had heard even of the escape of the boy.* When this had been *done*, Mr. Astlett came to ask me what he should do with these people; and, my answer was this: "I have nothing to do "with the matter, Astlett, nor do I know "whether you have done right or wrong; "but, as you *have* taken them into cus-"tody, I think your best way is to take "them before Mr. Smith (at Southampton) "who issued the warrant for taking the "boy up." After this, at the request of Mr. Astlett, I determined on going to Southampton myself; and, having some other business to do with the Justice's Clerk, I told Mr. Astlett that I would meet him at the office, and *get him the best advice I could*, all along telling him to recollect, that the affair was none of mine; that it was his affair; that it was to him that I had to look for my servant; and that, if the servant was not brought back, I was resolved to punish those who had let him escape.——Thus far, then, as to the *taking* of the plaintiff, I had no hand, nor had I any *knowledge*.——When I was setting off to Southampton, Mr. Astlett and Dubber were preparing to put the old woman and the plaintiff into a cart to take them thither; and I stopped opposite the place where they were, to remind Mr. Astlett again, that the affair was no affair of mine; that he might take them to Southampton or not, just as he pleased; but, that, if he did take them there, I would get him the best advice I could.——I then proceeded on to the office of the magistrate's clerk, whither I was soon followed by Mr. Astlett and his prisoners. Having waited some time for the clerk's return home, I went myself to the magistrate, and gave him a full account of what had passed. He said, that, under all the cir-

cumstances, the best way, he thought, would be for the constable to let the people go, getting them to promise to bring the boy as soon as possible. Accordingly, when I went back to the clerk's office, I told Mr. Astlett this, and, as it was Saturday, we got them to promise to bring the boy on the next Monday. They were then suffered to depart, at about five o'clock in the evening, having, at the utmost, been in duress for not more than *nine hours*, having suffered *no assault*, and having sustained no other injury than the loss of a day's work, which they would have lost, whether they had been forcibly detained, or not; seeing that they had come from home, of their own accord, and were, by their own free will, at Botley at eight or nine o'clock of the same day. Their intention was, too, to go to Southampton along with the boy; so that, if all had went on according to their own *voluntary intentions*, they would have had to *walk* the six miles and a half that Mr. Astlett carried them in his taxed cart, and would, of course, have suffered more than they actually did suffer.——Here, then, is, the mighty "*injury*"! Here is that "act "of *oppression*," which has been blazoned through the country! And here is that, which, had we not had a jury of sensible and honest men, would have extorted a good round sum of money.

From this statement, it must be evident to you, Gentlemen, and to every one who shall read this letter, that I had no hand either in the imprisonment, or the detention, of the pauper plaintiff or his mother. Not that I think, that the constable did wrong; for, though it might not be exactly *legal*, it was quite *reasonable*, that he should take before the magistrate those who, whether by stratagem or force, had rescued his prisoner. But, though I still think that the constable did right, *I had nothing at all to do with the matter*, any more than Mr. Borough or old George Rose himself.—But now, as to the *real source* of this action. In about a fortnight after the escape of the boy and the taking up of his brother and mother, Mr. Astlett and Dubber went again in search of the boy, whom they found at his father's house. What took place *in* the house it is not necessary to state here. Things took this turn, that Mr. Astlett came to Botley for assistance, while Dubber was left in the garden to see that the boy did not escape. ——Now, observe, the new characters that come upon the scene.—— One STONE, who was *bailiff to* MR. GOODLAD (whose house stands at a little distance), and which STONE was also *tything-man* of the place, came to Dubber, and told him, as Dubber says, *to go away*, for that he had no business there.—Mr. Goodlad, who lives in the parish of Droxford, and who is *a justice of the peace*, was the *master* of Wm. Burgess, the pauper plaintiff, and the occasional employer of others of the family. I knew him pretty well, and he had always seemed to me to be a very harmless man. He was, as I am told, a *salt-dealer* in *India*, and, at his return, like most other persons who have made fortunes in that country, he built a big white house upon a hill; and the spot being in the tything of *Hill*, he called his residence *Hill Place*.—Poor Paull, told me, that, in India, he went by the name of "*honest* DICK GOOD-"LAD;" and, I am ready to confess that his general conduct in our neighbourhood, has well corresponded with this appellation. He has laboured with great judgment and effect in bettering the lot of the poor in his parish, and, at the same time, greatly reducing the poor-rates; but, he knows very well, that, even in this way, *I have done a great deal more than he has*; he knows very well, that no labourer of *mine* could have *sworn himself a PAUPER*. However, he has done a great deal, and, I believe from very good motives. So well satisfied have I been of this, that I, about a year ago, joined with the farmers of the parish in a subscription for the purpose of purchasing him a piece of plate, by way of acknowledgment for the pains he had taken in arranging and conducting the affairs of the parish, particularly relating to the poor.——Such being the man, and such my opinion of him, I was very much surprised when the constable told me, that the Burgesses boasted of having *the support of Mr. Goodlad*. I accordingly wrote to him by the constable, stating to him the whole of the circumstances, cautioning him against being deceived by the stories of the Burgesses, and expressing a hope, that he, as a magistrate, who must naturally desire to see the law duly executed, would give the constable countenance and support. To my utter astonishment, the answer I received was, as nearly as I can recollect, this:—*that the whole of the fault of resistance lay with the constable of Botley, whose* IGNORANCE *of his duty had induced him to execute a warrant* OUT OF HIS OWN HUNDRED; and, not a single word about giving the constable

countenance and support! The answer further informed me, however, that the old woman and her son William, the pauper plaintiff, had been at the *Bench* at Droxford, where they had been told, that, if their story was true, *they might bring an action for false imprisonment.*——It was from this letter that arose the cross questions, put to the old woman in court, where it appeared that the magistrates at this Bench, sitting in their capacity as magistrates, not only told the old woman and her pauper son, that they had ground of action, but *advised them to go to the Attorney* (Gunner) for the purpose of commencing the action. They did not send to me, their neighbour; they did not send to Mr. Astlett, one of their peace-officers, and whose "*ignorance*" entitled him, in a peculiar manner, to their advice; they did not do any thing of this sort, in order to come at the real facts of the case; but, without a moment's delay, counselled an action for false imprisonment, and sent off the people to an Attorney; and, the old woman, upon being asked, whether this bench of magistrates *gave her advice to take her run-away son back to his master's service,* answered, *that they did not.*——The persons *generally* composing this bench are the Rev. Mr. *Poulter,* the Rev. Mr. *Baynes,* a brother of *general Clavering,* and Mr. *Goodlad.* From the old woman's evidence, it appeared, that, upon the occasion now spoken of, there were actually present, besides Mr. Goodlad, only Mr. *Baynes* and a Mr. *Henry Minchin,* the former of whom has the merit of having, from very low life (his father having kept an alehouse at Bishop's Waltham) got up to the possession of a pretty good living, after having, I believe, had the honour of being teacher to a son of the bishop of the diocese, who, it will be remembered, is a brother in-law of Poulter. Of Mr. Henry Minchin, the public shall hear some curious particulars another time. At any rate, we are all about upon a footing in respect to birth. The pedigree of none of us need occasion much trouble at the Herald's office; so that, there was nothing, in point of *etiquette,* to prevent these magistrates from writing to me, or even to the constable, and inquiring into the truth of the matter; for, as to *family* (of which so much has been said of late) I rather think, that, if the matter were strictly enquired into, of the whole of the parties concerned, the constable would be found at the top of the tree.

Here, then, we have the *origin* of the action. Let us now see a little of its progress.——The *Attorney* was soon in motion. Botley, Droxford, Hill-Pound, Southampton, and the borders of the Forest, heard the sound of his horse's feet, and were struck with the eager countenance of the rider. He went to Mr. Astlett to learn whether *I had not a hand in the matter,* and Mr. Astlett uniformly assured him, *that I had nothing at all to do with either the imprisonment or the detention.* Since the Trial, Mr. Astlett has made, before a magistrate at Southampton, an Affidavit, of which the following is a copy:

COUNTY OF SOUTHAMPTON. } William Astlett of the parish of Botley, in the said county, constable of the said parish of Botley, personally appeared before me, Richard Vernon Sadlier, Esq. one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said county of Southampton, and made Oath,—That, of the arrest of William Burgess, plaintiff in an action tried at Winchester, on the 20th instant, Wm. Cobbett, Esq. was, as far as this deponent firmly believes, totally ignorant, until *after the said arrest had taken place;*—that this deponent never *spoke to,* or *saw,* Mr. Cobbett [after the escape of the boy Jesse Burgess], until about *three hours after the arrest had taken place;*——that neither at that, or any future, time, did Mr. Cobbett aid, by advice or otherwise, *in the imprisonment or detention of the said William Burgess or his mother;*——that Mr. Cobbett, from first to last, said he did not understand the law in this respect, that he would have nothing to do with the matter, and that he (this deponent) *might keep the people, or let them go, just as he pleased;*——And that, *before* the action was brought, he (this deponent) *declared all this to Mr. Gunner, the plaintiff's Attorney.*

(Signed) WILLIAM ASTLETT.

Sworn at the Town and County of Southampton, this 25th day of July, 1809. *Before me* } R. V. SADLIER.

Here, then, Gentlemen, you plainly see the reason for making the constable and the tythingman *parties* along with me. By so doing the schemers deprived me of the *possibility of producing evidence* to prove that I had nothing to do with the matter. ——As to the conduct of the *Attorney,* that did not at all surprize me, and would surprize nobody. The man was labouring in his vocation. He was earning his

living. It was his calling, that he was at work in; and there are different sorts of work for attorneys as well as for men of other callings. But, what shall we say to Mr. Borough, who talked of the necessity of *making an example of me;* who declared me to be the *instigator to the arrest;* who mixed up *politics* with his law; and who, with all the *affectation of sincerity*, called upon me, "*challenged*" me, *to produce a witness* to contradict what his witnesses would swear! And all this, when he *well knew*, that the *only* persons who could *possibly* disprove what the family of Burgess would swear, were made *parties along with me*, and, by that means, were cut off from being witnesses; when he well knew, when he must have known, that this was the scheme from the beginning!——He said, that I was the great aggressor, and that all, or most part, of the damages, *ought to fall upon me.* Well, then, *why* was the action brought against Mr. Astlett and Dubber? Why not have attacked *me alone?* Why harrass and put to expence two men, whom I, as was alledged, had persuaded, if not forced, to act illegally? Why not leave them out, *and have their evidence*, which would have been so much more satisfactory against me, than that of the old woman and her daughter? If the object was to produce *truth* and general conviction as to my *oppressive disposition*, why stick me into a record along with a constable and a tything man? Why not, again I say, leave these two men to give evidence against me, *the truth of which evidence nobody could have doubted?* ——It is useless to pursue these questions. Mr. Astlett's Affidavit is an answer to them all; and, I need not say another word, to enable any man of common understanding to affix to the whole of this transaction, and to the several parties concerned in it, the character they deserve, and which character, I trust, they will bear.——I will just add, that Mr. Astlett, who is a Blacksmith, is a man of considerable property; that he is not at all under my influence, but, on the contrary, has been supposed to be rather at variance with me, I having, better than a year ago, ceased to employ him, which, before that time, I used to do.

My enemies, which, Gentlemen, are *your enemies*, and the worst enemies of our country: I do not mean any poor, paltry things in the country; but our enemies, *who have power over the press in London;* these enemies, like all men who are more under the influence of vindictive passions than of reason, have, in this, as in many other instances, contributed towards my elevation in their endeavours to pull me down.——In the first place, by the very noise, that they have made about this action, without any thing else, they confess their fear of me, and proclaim their high opinion of my consequence in the country. There is no man, who reads what they have caused to be published, who must not, from the bare magnitude of the publication, when compared with the result, conceive a high notion of the person attacked. He must without any *reasoning* at all, imbibe a high opinion of my consequence in the country.——Mr. Borough called me plain "*Cobbett,*" and the Judge, in summing up, observed upon what Mr. Jekyll had said about my being a "*public character,*" that he did not see any reason for giving that appellation to "*a man* "who *wrote in a news-paper.*" With all my heart. I do not want to be, or to be thought, a "*public character;*" but, the vexation of it is, my enemies, and the enemies of my country, will make me one; they will insist upon my being a public character; I must be so, in spite of all my efforts to bury myself in woods and in fields. "A *man* who writes in a *news-paper*" is an appellation that will do very well for me; but, they will not let me be quiet with it; they will suffer no act of mine, no office of life performed by me, to pass with that degree of notice which is bestowed upon the acts and offices of common men. If, for instance, Mr. Poulter or Mr. Sturges (who is another very near neighbour of the Burgesses) had happened to have been defendant, the other day, in my place, there would not have been twenty people present to hear the trial; and, if any notice at all of it had been taken in the news-papers, that notice would have been squeezed into three lines. They wish to sink me into oblivion; and, they have so ably managed the matter as to make even the sound of my name sufficient to call together a multitude of people, in any part of the kingdom. When the run-away boy was retaken at Winchester, and I went before the magistrate to give an information against him, the room was instantly filled with black coats and white heads. It was quite charming to see, that the poor had so many friends amongst the fat fellows assembled. I think there were four, who *gratuitously* pleaded for the boy; while "*poor* boy!" issued from the mouths

of fifty people at once, who live in laziness upon the labour of the poor.

If it were not useless to be angry, one might, and I do think, without any sin at all, wish for the power of exterminating this race of hypocrites, who, so far from believing me to be an oppressor of the poor, count, amongst their reasons for hating me, that, as far as my personal influence extends, I have made the labouring people comparatively independent. It is a shame for me, at such a time as this, when the most interesting political subjects present themselves for discussion: it is a shame for me, at such a time, to fill my pages with my own domestic concerns; but, as in the case of the Court-Martial, it is really rendered necessary for the sake of the public cause. I am informed, that, so early as Friday last, the very day after the trial, the walls in London were covered over with large bills about the "OPPRESSIONS OF COBBETT;" and "COBBETT, THE OPPRESSOR OF THE POOR," &c. &c. These posting bills cost, perhaps, *fifty pounds a day!* And, by the time that this thing is done with, it will, I dare say, cause an expenditure of, at the very least, *ten thousand pounds*. This is doing pretty well for the purpose of circulating the knowledge of an action, in which I am brought in for damages to the amount of *3l. 6s. 8d.*; nor is it amiss to bear in mind, that these publications, these wonderful exertions of philanthrophy, are making by those very persons, who, from first to last, defended the conduct, all and every part of the conduct, of the *Jailor Aris!*—— For these reasons, for the sake of the *public cause*, which is thus sought to be injured through me, I think I shall be excused for stating some facts, which will, much better than any general description, enable those who do not know me to judge of my character as a *master* or *employer*.——In the first place, I have made it a rule, that I will have the labour of no man, who receives *parish relief*. I give him, out of *my own pocket*, let his family be what it may, enough to keep them well, without any regard to what wages other people give; for I will employ *no pauper*. I pay poor-rates, part of which go to the maintenance of other people's labourers; but, any thing in the shape of parish relief; any thing to obtain which a man is to humble himself into a pauper, I never suffer a labourer of mine to receive.——In the next place, I give my men *constant* pay, all seasons and all weathers. My labourers have none of those anxieties about the weather that labourers in general have; and, though I have no rule about *sickness*, I have never yet had, amongst my constant labourers, a sick man, whom I did not pay all the same as if he were well.——I have now four men whom I employ constantly, one has been with me ever since I first came to reside at Botley; one about two years and a half; and the other two about a year and a half; and to only two of these men, and that upon only one occasion, did I ever give an angry word. These men have always been *by the week*, so that, once in every seven days, they have had an opportunity of quitting me, if they chose.——I wish the hungry-looking philanthropists, who exclaimed, "*poor* boy!" over my run-away carter, could see my labourers. I wish still more that we had an opportunity of comparing them with their half-starved wretches, who, from sheer poverty of blood, are eaten up with disease. I wish all England could see my labourers and compare them with those who have hatched against me this charge of oppression. Has Mr. *Borough* labourers? If he has, I here offer to bet him the amount of the damages *he laid* against the amount of the damages *he got*, that any *three* of my labourers receive as much from me as any *five* of his labourers receive from him. Come, Mr. Goodlad, I'll offer you a bet; and that is, that I pay *one fourth more, all the year round*, to a labourer who has only *one arm*, than you pay to your labourer, William Burgess, the pauper plaintiff. No labourer of mine has, indeed, the advantage of being able *to swear himself a pauper*; no man who labours for me, no man whose sweat drops upon my land, however large his family, stands in need of any thing but what I give him in the shape, not of alms, but of *pay*; but William Burgess, a labourer of this Mr. Goodlad, one of those who advised the action, could, with only *one child*, and he an able young man, *swear himself a pauper!*——I do not pretend, that it is from a regard for my labourers that I give such great wages; for, I am convinced, that it is my interest to do it. One of my labourers is worth two or three half-famished creatures. But, my great motive is, the lessening of the number of paupers; the setting an example in this way, that may tend to raise part, at least, of the labouring people from that state of *slavery*, commonly called *pauperism*. No man that is in health, that has the use of his limbs,

and is, in all respects, able to labour, ought to be reduced to the necessity of *begging;* and what is it but begging, to go weekly for parish relief? This is the most shocking thing that ever existed in any country upon the face of the earth. That one half, or more, of the *labourers* of a country should be paupers, is really something too disgraceful to think of. I have always thought this, and now that I have it in my power to put my principles in practice, I do it as far as I possibly can. A constant state of pauperism would debase the best nature that man ever possessed. A labourer in this state is always studying deceit; he is afraid of nothing so much as of appearing prosperous, healthy, or happy; he contracts a plaintive language and manner; the worst side he always puts outwards; his children are studiously clad in rags and covered with filth; his wife is always "poorly;" and, in short, a few years robs him of every particle of spirit and sincerity. He, like slaves every where else (for to *have nothing* is to be a slave), has no regard for country, or for any thing attached to country; and all his hopes and all his wishes centre in the quantity of food to be extracted from the overseer. Is it not shocking to reflect upon the natural, the inevitable, consequences of rearing families in this way? I never should have a moment's peace, if a labourer of mine was thus rearing up a brood of hypocrites. A family, thus reared, not only is likely to be, but is sure to be, a nest of thieves and impostors. Nor is the "*comforting* system" much better; the cow-system, the child-bed-linen system, the church-going system, and the industry system, all which, like the schools of Mrs. Hannah More, do more harm than good. In fact, all the largesses that well-meaning people bestow, in any of these ways, are so many *premiums for hypocrisy*, which, amongst the poor in particular, is the worst of all vices. A good labourer may be in distress. Give him something, then, at once, and *say no more about it*. Let him do with it what he pleases. Make no bargains with him about his morality; for, if you do, you make him a hypocrite. It is quite delightful to see this village of Botley, when compared to most others that I know. They seem here to be quite a different race of people. They are what some people call saucy, but, they are not hypocrites. They are, in short, what Englishmen ought to be; they show their humours when they like; they give *their* labour for *your* money, and think there is *no obligation* on either side. Beautiful as is this part of the country, and this village in particular, there is nothing in either that pleases me like the spirit of the people, who are a race of men quite different from those, who, in the school of pauperism, have learnt all the arts of cringing and dissimulation.——The way, in which we have proceeded here, is really worth being made public, and may, with a little individual exertion, be turned to great and general utility. As an instance: we had two families, one of which contained *nine* children and the other *seven*, the whole of whom, drawn up in rank-intire, and set off to the best advantage, that is to say, half hung over with rags, the rest of the body being naked, were arrayed against us before a bench of magistrates. We were satisfied, that, owing to particular circumstances, they had quite a sufficient income; but, as we could not *prove* it upon oath, the magistrates were about to order them relief, when I offered to *pay* them weekly all that they *said* they earned, and, besides that, as much as they *received from the parish*, rather than suffer them to continue paupers. They declined my offer, got no relief, and have not only done without relief since, but have gradually assumed a more decent and prosperous appearance; and, for this very obvious reason, that they have no longer an *interest in being thought miserable*. Here were, at once, sixteen children raised from a state of pauperism; that is to say, from all sorts of vice, but particularly of that worst of all vices, hypocrisy.——I have mentioned this, in the hope that some few persons, at least, who have the power, will try the experiment; will endeavour to lessen this terrible evil of pauperism. The fact is, that, as matters now stand, the paupers are *partners* in no inconsiderable part of the property of every farmer; and, Gentlemen, I beg you to observe, that this part of your property is not left to *yourselves* to distribute, but is taken out of your hands at the will of the next bench of magistrates, a great part of whose sway consists in the disposing of that part of your property called Poor-rates; and thus, this disgraceful evil of pauperism, does, in some degree, produce *your* subjection also, of which it is impossible to get rid by any other means than these, of which I have been speaking. The power to dispose of this money is frequently, and, indeed, almost always, in

this county, in the hands of those, who *pay little or no part of it*. This is, of itself, a very galling consideration; but, as I said before, there is, at present, no way of getting rid of, or lessening, the evil, without reducing, by some means or other, the number of paupers.

To return again, for a few minutes, to the subject of my treatment of labouring people, I do not know any thing more decisive that I can say than this: I do not like to throw out a *general* challenge, but I will select a few remarkable gentlemen in the county; and first there are the two County Members, Messrs. *Chute* and *Heathcote*; then there is the *High Sheriff*; then there is Mr. *Borough*, the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions; and, lastly, there is *Old George Rose*. Now, if my labourers do not, upon an average, receive from me constantly, above one fourth part more pay, than the labourers of these gentlemen, or any of them, receive from them, I will then be content to pass for a grinder of the poor.——Of all the charges that could have been invented, that of being a hard master, or employer, is the one that suits me least. All those who know me, know that I never higgle as to prices in any case whatever; that I never attempt to beat any body down; never attempt to cheapen any thing; never waste any of the precious moments of life in this sort of lying and cheating. If the public would know what I am in this respect, let them look at those who have been long employed under me. Let them look at Mr. Bagshaw and Mr. Budd, both of whom have been constantly employed by me, in one way or another, ever since my return to England. A young man, who was my shop-man, in America,- and whom I took from being a journeyman book-binder, now has the business which I had at New York. This prosperity is not too much; it is not more than they have all merited; but, it has been invariably the case with those employed by me, that, if *sober* and *industrious*, they have rapidly risen in life, I myself being to them an example of sobriety and industry. Accordingly, I have been, and I am, better served than any body else. Those who have been long employed by me, not only like my employment, but they like me personally better than they like any other man in the world, and this, not from any wheedling or coaxing they get from me; not from any cant about humanity; not on account of any *palaverings*; but on account of that frankness and sincerity which they always experience from me, that freedom in conversation, that unrestrained familiarity, and that absence of every thing like superciliousness or austerity, which have always marked my character, and, in all which, to the surprize of most observers, I indulge, with my children as well as with all others under me, without at all lessening the weight of my authority. That reserve, that distant behaviour, and all those arts, which are so often resorted to for the purpose of keeping up a consequence in the eyes of inferiors, I despise. I would sooner earn my bread with a mattock or a spade, than make use of such arts. In short, I do not believe, that, in the whole world, there is one man more completely happy in family and in those under his authority than I am; and, I do not believe, that there are many who deserve it more. In my house we know of no such thing as blue-devils (which, by-the-bye, are much worse than black devils); we know of no lowness of spirits; we are always sober, always industrious, always up early in the morning; and, like the Quakers, we are *never gay*, and, therefore, we are *always chearful*. Our taste is to lay out, what we are able to lay out, upon *useful labour*; upon that the effects of which will, in one way or another, be seen and felt when we shall be no more. This is our taste, and not to exhaust our substance, and entail a life of dependence upon our children, by vain and empty attempts at show. We have too just notions of what constitutes happiness, as well as of what is our duty towards our children, to waste, in vain parade, that which may make those children as independent in conduct as we are. Our maxim is, that we have *no right* to live in a stile higher than that in which we have a fair chance of enabling *each* of our children to live; that it would be *criminal* in us to bring our family up in a way, which would induce them to expect a life higher than the one that *we* can *secure* to them, and which might lead them to become dependents upon the government, that is to say, a *higher sort of paupers*, and tempt them to do all manner of base and infamous acts. We see too many of those miserable creatures, who, with all the outward show of ease and gaiety, lead a life of continual care and woe; we see too much of this splendid beggary; we see too many of these higher sort of paupers, to think of imitating them; and, indeed, it is because we are happy and independent, because

we care for none of them, because we despise them, because we are a living satire upon their baseness, that they hate us, and would gladly see us exterminated. They put me in mind of Milton's Devil, in the garden of Eden, looking round the bush and gnashing his fangs, at Adam and Eve.

Now, Gentlemen, it is really a shame, at a time like this, to fill a public paper (which ought to be devoted exclusively to political topics) with matter like this; but, what am I to do? I have carefully examined the news-papers, commonly called ministerial, and, I find, that, for more than two months past, more space has been occupied with ME, than with the Emperor Napoleon, the Archduke Charles, and Sir Arthur Wellesley, all put together; and, I could almost venture to assert, that, during that time, there have been, in various ways, not less than from *twenty to thirty thousand pounds* expended upon publications against me. The Trial, relating to this pauper, was, as I before observed, inserted in those papers to the exclusion of the account of that battle, which, in all probability, has decided the fate of continental Europe. In short, when compared to the defeating of me, the defeating of Buonaparté appears to be considered as a mere trifle. His fearful, his terrific success, really seems to have been overlooked during the tide of joy excited by the damages of £3. 6*s*. 8*d*. obtained against me at Winchester; and, all that appears to have been wanting, was, the firing of the Park and Tower guns, when the news of this famous achievement was received. This being the case, I am compelled, in spite of my natural inclination, to consider myself as a person of great consequence not only in this county, but through the kingdom; I am compelled to consider whatever relates to my conduct or my character as being of great public importance, and as being deeply interesting to all descriptions of persons. "Greatness is "thrusted upon me;" and, as if it were impossible to do the thing sufficiently in London, recourse has been had to the assistance of my neighbours in the country. I, therefore, have no need of any apology for this long address upon matters relating almost wholly to myself; for, the fact notoriously is, that, notwithstanding the great events that are passing upon the continent of Europe, there is, in England, no subject whatever, which excites so much public interest as the character and conduct of William Cobbett.

One word, Gentlemen, by way of conclusion, relative to the conduct of the *Judge* and the *Jury*. Some persons thought, that the Judge's summing up was *hostile towards me*. I must confess, that I did not think so. It was next to impossible that he should have any notion of the case as it must *now* appear to you and to the public. There was a buz of calumny and falsehood against me, running through the city of Winchester. Little or much of this would naturally reach the ears of the Judge, and those ears he could not shut. But, independent of this, the *evidence* was such, that, unless the Judge had known the parties, and the whole history of the thing, I do not see how he was to draw any other conclusion than what he did. In short, I saw in the judge's conduct nothing that appeared to me at all unfair; and, I hope, that, in a similar case, I should have acted just as he did. ——The *jury*, not one of whom did I know, and not one of whom lives, I think, within ten or twelve miles of Botley, would, however, naturally be better acquainted with the real nature of the case than the judge. They were, for the most part, farmers; and, as a great talk had been excited by the falsehoods which my enemies were circulating, these farmers would naturally make inquiries amongst the farmers from my neighbourhood, and would, thereby, get at something nearer the truth. They would perceive, too, that which the Judge could not be expected to perceive, relative to the *conduct of the bench at Droxford*. The moment we got the Old Woman to confess, that a bench of *magistrates*, before whom she went, did *not* recommend her to induce her run-away son to return to his master's service, but *advised her to bring an action against that master and the two peace-officers, who alone could be witnesses for him*; the moment we got the Old Woman to confess this, the jury must have seen to the bottom of the matter. Still, however, there was the *evidence*, which, owing to the circumstances before mentioned, we could not overset: and therefore, it was impossible not to give the verdict against us; but, the jury took care, at the same time, to act *justly*, and they thereby most cruelly disappointed those expectations, which many had evidently formed. Had the judge and jury seen the case in its true light, had the forms of law permitted me to produce the evidence that I could have produced, the damages would not

have been sufficient to purchase the Attorney a glass of grog, or a quid of tobacco; and yet the *bets* ran at between 300*l.* and 500*l.*; and the jury were, by some gay-dressed rabble that stood near a friend of mine, execrated almost to their teeth. The disappointment of Mr. BOROUGH, who appeared to be the favourite of the day, was the most striking. While the Jury were consulting, he, with folded brief in one hand and pen in the other, was prepared to *note down the verdict*. His body was not on tip-toe, for he sat down, but his mind manifestly was. The jury paused a little. He dipt his pen afresh, and again brought it to the attitude of making the to-be-celebrated record. His eagerness was observed. He affected to chat. A jury-man made a half turn: back came the pen, replenished with a new dip. Thus he sat, his arms upon the table, his eye fixed upon the jury-box, all his muscles strained, apparently, to their utmost stretch—when, at the sound of the words *ten pounds*, down, with a sort of fling, went the brief out of one hand and the pen out of t'other. That these workings of anxiety and disappointment were not confined to the breasts of the pauper's counsel was very evident from that longitude of face, which, at the moment when Mr. Borough dropt his pen and brief, became dolefully visible in some of the gayest and most smirking of the boxes.

Thus, Gentlemen, burst that bubble, which the envy and hatred of some, and the folly of others, had blown up till it assumed a magnitude superior to that of all the other causes brought before the court; and thus, it is possible, though by no means certain, that my and your enemies received a lesson from an honest Jury, that may be useful to them in future. Nothing so completely as this affair, and the publications that have arisen out of it, could prove to the whole nation, to what low and despicable means of calumny my enemies are capable of resorting. Gentlemen, all that my friends, that is to say, the friends of the Constitution of England, have to do, is, to put to my enemies this question: "Would YOU have ad-"vised, or pushed on, or had even *the* "*smallest share* in, that action against Mr. "Cobbett?" Put this question to them *individually;* put this question to each man *in the face of all companies*. Ask them, then, whether *they* never *swear* at those with whom they are angry? And, if the blush of shame does not come upon their cheek, if they are such double-distilled hypocrites as still to affect horror at such expressions, set them down for the disciples of some *gambling, drunken, impious,* political priest.

With every sentiment of regard,
I am,
Your friend,
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 26th July 1809.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

AUSTRIA.——I need not remind the reader what have been my *opinions* as to the result of the war between Austria and France. He will not fail to bear in mind, that, while the philosophers of the MORNING POST and the COURIER were shouting victory; and while even the sensible men, who write in the CHRONICLE, the TIMES, and the STATESMAN, were almost ready to join in the shout, I was using the utmost of my endeavours to prevent the public from conceiving those hopes, which could do no good if realized, and which, if disappointed, must produce much mischief. From the beginning of this ill-starred war I predicted what has now taken place. I never could see the smallest reason to believe, that the war would be successful on the part of Austria; but, I found people enough ready to believe it without any reason at all. If my advice (and why, since they will have me to be so great a man, should I not offer my advice)? if my advice had been taken, the emperor of Austria might now have been safe at Vienna, and some millions, perhaps, of English money, the fruit of English labour, would now have been in our possession, instead of being expended upon this war.——It is, however, now too late to talk of this. It appears but too manifest, that my opinion expressed only the week before last, namely, that Napoleon was "upon the "eve of *totally annihilating* the authority "of the House of Austria," is now likely to be speedily verified. This being the case, the *manner* of it is of little importance. It signifies not a straw, whether he do away the *name*, or whether he suffer that to exist, so that he does away, in effect, the power heretofore belonging to it.—— Let us now, then, as I proposed in my first Letter to the King, *look at home*. In that letter, I anticipated what has now taken place; and, it was, because I was so fully convinced that it would take place; it was for this reason principally, that I

addressed myself to the King, in the hope of thereby exciting more attention to a subject of vital importance, not only to the interests and welfare of the people, but to the *independence* of the country, and, of course, to the security of his Majesty's throne.——The case supposed in that Letter, the complete subjugation of the continent of Europe by Napoleon, is, I think it will not be denied, now at no great distance. For my part, I can see nothing upon the continent to prevent it; and, as to our *expedition*, I will not, I cannot talk of it!——I may be deceived. My opinion may be wrong; but, it is my opinion, that the continent of Europe is now subdued. If my opinion be erroneous, so much the better; but, at any rate, there is no man, who wishes for England to retain her independence, who will not readily agree, that we ought now to take our measures upon the supposition, that Napoleon *will* subdue the whole of the continent; and, of course, that he will have all its ports and all its naval means in his hands.——The question, then, is, what ought these measures to be? I have not room, at present, to discuss them; but, I cannot refrain from making a few detached observations.——And first, let me beseech those, who have the power over our national force, not to waste any portion of it, however small, upon foreign conquests of any sort. I mention this, because it is a notion very fashionable amongst the people in the city, that, "if "Napoleon has all the continent, we must "have all the *colonies* belonging to the con- "tinent;" which is much about the same thing as to say, "if you get more strength "to attack me with, I will take *a load upon* "*my shoulders*, in order to be able the better "to resist you." This is a truth from which I never depart, that colonies *never add to a nation's means of defence*, and, indeed, that they always *diminish the strength* of a nation. I hope, therefore, that we shall not delude ourselves with the hope of finding, in the new world, "a *balance*," as it has been called, against the power of Buonaparté in the old world; for, I am quite certain, that such "balance" would prove to be a mill-stone about our necks. ——The STATESMAN news-paper, proposes PEACE as our means of averting destruction. His words are these: "What is "now to be the object of the Expedition? "That is a question which we refer to the "sapience of the Chancellor of the Ex- "chequer, Mr. Canning, and, though last "not least, Lord Castlereagh. Where now "are those warlike heroes who 'cast up "'their caps,' and 'cheered' on the "Royal Exchange of the city of London, "when Lord Lauderdale returned from "Paris? *Peace must now be had.*—An effort "on the Continent would now be more than "madness.—Napoleon, delivered by the "irresistible efforts of his own genius, from "the imminent, but final, danger with "which he could be threatened—is now "firmly, immoveably, and permanently "fixed.—He has vanquished all opposition "—from the Peninsula he will now drive "all other intruders—and the Continent of "Europe will at length return to that "state of repose from which it was awak- "ened by England—and by England "alone.—England began the war by "breaking the Treaty of Amiens—and "she must terminate it upon the best terms "that can be obtained.—Of Walcheren "we might possibly obtain possession— "but that it can be permanently main- "tained, is impossible. Every port and "creek on the continent will now be "closed—harsh and inharmonious as *the* "*word Peace may sound* in the ears of the "*War Faction—to that we must come*—and, "if the final result of all these disasters "shall so terminate—*the tears* which the "*calamities* of war have produced, will be "at length wiped away by the return of "*Peace*."——I am sorry to differ in opinion with this gentleman, but, really, I see not, at present, the possibility of peace; nor do I under our present system of warfare see even the seeds of future peace.—— There is a little too much of party acrimony in this paragraph, for which I am sorry. If any man has reason to be resentful; if any man could possibly justify his enmity to measures for the sake of the men by whom they have been adopted, it certainly would be myself; but, I trust I shall never lose sight of my duty to my country; and, I must say, that, whoever were the cause of the war, I cannot see, at present, any hope of obtaining peace, without submitting to terms so disgraceful as to amount almost to a surrender of the crown of our Sovereign into the hands of Buonaparté; rather than see which day, there are not, I hope, many men in England, who would not, in spite of all the calumnies raised against them, literally shed the last drop of their blood.——I do not know what is here meant by the "*war-faction;*" for, I know of no man of any public consequence, who wishes for war, if he could have peace

with a common chance of *safety*. Can it be shewn to me, how it is possible; I do not say probable, but *possible* to obtain peace, at the present time, with a chance of safety? If peace is made, a part, at least, of *our* naval means must be laid aside; a part of the fleet must be dismantled; and, it is *certain*, that a peace of only *two years* would, if we were to make peace *now*, give Buonaparté a fleet of *a hundred sail of the line*. There is no doubt upon this point. No man can call the position in question. What, then, are we to do? Go to war again, with every thing to create, or repair? How long could we go on thus?—— My opinion is, that Napoleon would make peace with us now, and very readily, because it would be convenient for him to get us quickly out of Spain and Portugal without either trouble or expence, and without the great dangers which his Marshals will have to encounter in facing "*the heroes of India.*" He would, without doubt, make peace with us now; but, to me it is as clear as day-light, that he would not suffer us to remain at peace two years, when he would again force us forth with our means greatly diminished and his means greatly augmented.——Does it appear to the editor of the Statesman, *that Buonaparté has a settled determination to subdue this kingdom?* If he answer that question in the affirmative, as I think he must, he will then, at once, see how peculiar is our situation. We can make no peace with Buonaparté upon *equal terms*, for we have no design to subdue any part of *his* empire. Ours must in this case be a peace *upon the defensive*. No matter who it is that has brought us into this situation. In this situation we are; and if, *in this situation*, and upon such a principle, we make peace, our days are numbered; the days of our remaining independence will be but as a span long. The peace of Amiens (no matter who broke it) we shall never see again. Good God! what a change since the peace of Amiens was made! Nay, how much worse are things than they were at the Convention of Cintra, or even at the retreat to Corunna!— Can we long preserve our independence, after Buonaparté has subdued *the whole of the continent of Europe?* In my opinion we can. In my opinion England may set him at defiance for ever. But, we must have *a new system of warfare;* we must interrupt and destroy that commercial connection, that nursery of seamen; we must cut off that inexhaustible source of naval means, mentioned in my First Letter to the King; or, my opinion is, that we shall not be able long to resist his undivided power.——"Now comes the tug of war." What we have heretofore seen has been mere child's-play to what we must see now. This country will now become the *sole* object of the greatest commander and the most numerous army that the world ever saw. Every single man in England should, betimes, make up his mind to the necessity of fighting for England upon English ground. Those are poltroons, or fools, who endeavour to hide the danger from others, or pretend not to see it themselves. Every man should ask *himself*, should put it home to his own heart, what he intends to do, in case a French army should land. The worst of it is, that we but too often talk of exertions in defence of the country, as if we *ourselves* had nothing to do with such exertions but to *talk* of them.——In 1804, when there was great *alarm*, but no *real danger*, or, at any rate, not a hundredth part of the danger that there soon will be and must be, I said, "Let us put out PITT as soon "as we can, but, in the mean while, let "us not think of him until we are *quite* "*prepared for beating the French.*" Such are my sentiments now. Let us do all we can in order to obtain a Reform of Abuses, because that is the way to make the country sound at heart; but, at the same time, let us, without considering who is minister, do all that lies in our power, and let *each man* (for that is the thing) do all that lies in his power to prepare for the country's defence against its foreign enemies.—The measures of the ministers may be unwise, as the *Local-Militia* law, for instance, and the putting a stop to that excellent measure, the enlistment for term of years; but, still, we must not give up *the country;* we must not give up England in our resentment against Lord Castlereagh, however just that resentment may be. Those, therefore, who, at ELY, and elsewhere, have quelled the spirit of mutiny amongst the Local-Militia, are certainly entitled to the thanks of the country. No one can be pleased to see his countrymen flogged; but, when, as in this case, they have *voluntarily* entered, and that, too, for the sake of *a bounty*, I say, as I said before, "flog them," if they do not abide by their bargain, and strictly obey their officers.——My opinion is, however, that, the sure means of national defence; the safe means as well as the cheap means, is

that proposed by MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, in his work called ENGLAND'S ÆGIS.—I have not, at present, time to add to these hasty and desultory remarks, but shall not fail to return to the subject in my next. The prospect before us is most awful; but, if we are wise and brave, we shall still be happy and free.

Botley, 27th July, 1809.

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To such Gentlemen as may happen to be in possession of curious Trials, or of documents relating to Trials of the description of those to be contained in this Work, I shall be much obliged for a communication of them. If the document, or paper, whether in print or manuscript, be requested to be preserved, great care shall be taken of it.

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OFFICIAL PAPERS.

FRENCH ARMY IN AUSTRIA.—*Twenty-fifth Bulletin, dated Wolkersdorf, July* 8.

The works raised by gen. count Bertrand, and the corps he commands, had, since the beginning of the month, entirely subdued the Danube. His Majesty instantly resolved to collect his forces in the island of Lobau, open upon the Austrian army, and bring on a general engagement. It was not because the position of the French army was not a very fine one at Vienna: master of the whole right bank of the Danube, having in his power Austria, and a considerable portion of Hungary, he enjoyed the greatest plenty.—If some difficulties had been experienced in providing sustenance for the people of Vienna, this arose from an ill-organized administration, from embarrassments which were every day diminishing, and from difficulties which were naturally produced by the situation in which the country was placed, in a land in which the trade in corn is an exclusive privilege of the government. But how could the troops continue to be separated from the hostile army, by a canal of three or four hundred toises in breadth, when the means of passing over had been prepared and secured? —This would have given credibility to the impostures which the enemy had scattered with so great profusion throughout his own and neighbouring countries: this would have cast a doubt over the occurrences at Essling, and would, finally, have

authorised the supposition of there being, in fact, a substantial equality between armies so different, of which one was animated and in some measure reinforced by the multiplicity of its successes and victories, while the other was dispirited by the most striking reverses.—All the intelligence concerning the Austrian army shewed that it was considerable; that it had been recruited by numerous bodies of reserve, by the levies from Moravia and Hungary, and by all the landwhers (fencibles) of the provinces; that its cavalry had been re-mounted by requisitions in all the circles, and its draughts of artillery tripled by immense levies of horses and carriages in Moravia, Hungary, and Bohemia.—To add new chances in their favour, the Austrian generals had raised military works, of which the right was protected by Gros-Aspern, and the left by Enzersdorf, and the intervals between them were covered by redoubts, surrounded by pallisades and frizes, and defended by more than 150 pieces of battering cannon, taken from the fortresses of Bohemia and Moravia.—It was inconceivable how the Emperor, with his experience in war, could think of attacking works so powerfully defended, backed by an army estimated at 200,000 men, as well troops of the line as militia and new raised levies, and who were supported by 800 or 900 pieces of field artillery. It appeared more simple to throw some fresh bridges over the Danube, a few leagues lower down, and thus render useless the field of battle prepared by the enemy. But in this latter case it was not thought practicable to avert the inconveniencies which had already nearly proved fatal to the army, and succeed, in the course of two or three days, in protecting these new bridges from the machines of the enemy.—On the other side the Emperor was tranquil.—Works were raised upon works in the island of Lobau; and several bridges on piles, and several rows of stoccadoes, were fixed at the same place.—This situation of the French army placed between these two great difficulties, had not escaped the enemy. He was aware that his army, too numerous and unwieldy, would be exposed to certain destruction if he acted on the offensive; but at the same time, he believed that it was impossible to dislodge him from the central position, in which he covered Bohemia, Moravia, and a part of Hungary. It is true that this position did not cover Vienna, and that the French were in possession of the capital. But this possession was, in a certain degree, disputed, since the Austrians remained masters of one bank of the Danube, and prevented the arrival of the articles most indispensible to the subsistence of so great a city. These were the reasons of hope and fear, and the subject of conversation in the two armies.—On the 1st of July, at four o'clock in the morning, the Emperor removed his head quarters to the island of Lobau, which had been already named by the engineers the island Napoleon. A small island, to which had been given the name of the duke of Montebello, and which bore upon Enzersdorf, had been furnished with ten mortars, and twenty 18-pounders. Another island called island Espagne, had been supplied with six pieces of battering cannon, 12-pounders, and four mortars. Between these two islands a battery had been raised, equal in force to that of the island Montebello, and in like manner bearing upon Enzersdorf. These 62 pieces of battering artillery had the same object, were in two hours to destroy the little town of Enzersdorf, drive away the enemy, and demolish the works. On the right, the island Alexander, with four mortars, two ten-pounders, and twelve six-pounders, battering cannon, were to bear upon the plain, and protect the operations of the bridges.—On the 2d the aide de camp of the duke de Rivoli, passed over to the Mill island with 500 voltigeurs, and took possession of it. This island was also furnished with cannon. It was joined to the continent, on the left side, by a small bridge. In the front a little fleche was raised, and this redoubt was called Petit.—In the evening the redoubts of Essling appeared to be jealous of these works; not doubting that they were a first battery, formed to act against themselves, they fired upon them with great activity. This was precisely the intention in having seized this island.—The attention of the enemy was to be drawn to this point, in order to conceal from him the operations really proposed.

(To be continued.)

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